

A  
DIALOGUE  
BETWEEN  
A  
DISSENTER  
AND THE  
OBSERVATOR,  
CONCERNING

*The Shortest Way with the* DISSENTERS.

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*By John Tutchin*



A

## DIALOGUE, &amp;c

*Diffen.* **P**RAY Sir, are you the Author of the *Ob-*  
*servator*?

*Obfer.* Suppose it Sir, what then?

*Disf.* Nay don't be angry, are you the reputed Author? *A.* Come off *you Taught me in one of your Papers about Mr. F.*

*Obsf.* And what then?

*Disf.* Why I wanted a little Civil Discourse with you.

*Obsf.* If it be Civil, as you say, you are Welcome, but you begin but odly.

*Disf.* My Questions may be blunt, but you are not bound to Answer them, but let that be as you like 'em.

First, Pray who do you reckon is the Author of this Devilish Book, call'd, *The Shortest Way*?

*Obsf.* I shall Answer most of your Questions with a Question, I believe, and begin with you here.

Do you think my Name is Mr. *Bellamy*, that you take me for an *Informer*? read the *Gazett*, there you have the Man with the *Sharp Chin*, and a *Dutch Nose*.

*Disf.* Ay, but Sir, we begin to doubt that is not the true Author, that he has been only made the Tool of some other party, who now they find the World Exasperated at it, have slip't out of the Noose, and left him in it; we begin to be afraid the thing is a Reality, and there is such a design on foot.

A 2

*Obsf.*

*Obs.* Your Answer, like Parson *Jacobs* Text, ought to be taken a pieces and Explain'd.

1. If you are not sure he is the Author, you *Dissenters* have done him a great deal of wrong, for you have rail'd at him more than all the rest of the World, and charg'd him with more Crimes than 'tis well possible for one Man to be Guilty of.

2. And yet by supposing him not to be the Author, you suppose him to be very Honest to his friends, that he bears all this without discovering them.

3. As for your fears of a real design, to put the *Shortest way* in practice upon you, no Question there are abundance of People in the World, who would be glad there was not one of you left; I believe no body doubts it.

*Dis.* Pray who do you think they are?

*Obs.* Sir your Humble Servant; no *Bellamy*, I tell you not I Sir; If I were in a Plot with the Devil, I'll never turn Evidence, besides Sir, I have no mind to have my Nose and Chin describ'd, but if you please I'll Answer you Negatively, who I believe are not concern'd in it.

*Dis.* That may be some satisfaction, Sir.

*Obs.* Not the Queen, Sir, not the Parliament, not the Council, not the Army, not the Ministers of State, not the Government.

*Dis.* Thou art a safe Man, thou'l't never go to *Newgate* for Negatives.

*Obs.* No Sir, nor for Positives neither, if I can help it; but you have had your will at Catechising, and I ought to have my turn, let me ask you a few Questions too.

*Dis.* You are welcome.

*Obs.* Pray why are you *Dissenters* Angry at the Book call'd *The Shortest Way*, 'Tis a little Mysteious, Sir, that the *Church Men* are Affronted because t'was Writ against them, and the *Dissenters* are Affronted because tis Wrote against them too, I don't well understand it, 'ne sort must be Fools, that's certain.

*Dis.*



*Dis.* I don't care whether I understand it or no, he is a *Rogue*, a *Villain*, and I wish the Government had him, if I knew where he was, I'd deliver him up and *abate them the 50 l.*

*Obs.* Spoken like a *Dissenter* truly, so that I find you are Angry at him because you don't understand him, and the Government because they do.

*Dis.* You are so sharp upon me, I do understand a little too, I understand he meddl'd with that he had nothing to do with, and he is the Man they say who has been the occasion of all this Persecution which is coming upon us, by railing at *Occasional Conformity*.

*Obs.* If he expos'd you for *Occasional Conformity*, 'tis what you ought to have rectifi'd your selves, that you need not have been expos'd for it; and in that he was your Friend; for had you took the hint and exploded the Practice, there had been no need of an Act of Parliament to force you to it.

*Dis.* But what had he to do with that?

*Obs.* Nay, What had Mr. *How* to do to meddle with it afterward, I'll assure you his Name is down in my Pocket Book, and when any Man in *England* defends a cause worse, I'll put his Name out, and put t'others Name in: But pray Sir, why do you call this bringing Persecution upon you; do you suppose the *Occasional* Bill will be a Persecution?

*Dis.* Without doubt it will.

*Obs.* What sort of Persecution can you call it? it can't be a Persecution for Conscience sake.

*Dis.* Why so Sir?

*Obs.* Why, pray Sir, suppose one of your Brethren *Dissenters*, who can go to the *Meeting* to Day, and to the *Church* to Morrow; take the *Sacrament* to Day, sitting, and to Morrow to get a good place, go to *Church*, and take it kneeling, wipe his Mouth and go home to Diuner,

Dinner, and so to the *Meeting* again ; suppose this Gentleman should be put up for *Sheriff*, or *Lord Mayor*, can this Man pretend Conscience not to Conform ? I tell you Sir, Mr. How must make a better Answer to the matter before I can be convinc'd, you may call it *Persecution* but it can never be for Conscience sake.

*Dis.* Persecution is Persecution, let it be for what sake it will, every man ought to be at liberty.

*Obs.* Ay that is true, I am for Liberty for every man to serve God as is most agreeable to his Conscience : But this is not serving God at all : besides Sir, I could easily make it appear, this Act is for your advantage, if ye were a sort of People were to be convinc'd.

*Dis.* Pray, how Sir ?

*Obs.* Why Sir, it will purge you of all your half in half Professors. That's one thing ; then it will put all those Gentlemen into a capacity of being in places and Parliaments, who tho' by this Act they are separated from you, and rejoin'd to the Church because they can conform, will still be friends to your Interest in all Publick Concerns ; and therefore had I been to word the Bill so as to have done most harm, it shou'd have excluded all that ever were Dissenters, and have forc'd you to continue so, and not have accepted your return to the Church without a publick Repentance.

*Dis.* Well, well, you may perswade us 'tis for our advantage, but we don't like it, and therefore we hate him for meddling with it ; for what had he to do with it ?

*Obs.* About as much as you and I have to do with him, if a man meddles with what does not concern him, that's his Fault, and if we who really have nothing to do with him, meddle with him, that is our Fault, let the Government alone with him, have you nothing else to talk on ?

*Dis.* Why all the Town has talkt of him as well as we.

*Obs.* Yes, and reckon'd up all his Faults, all the  
sins



sins that ever he committed in his Life, and abundance more ; be the man who he will, and what he will, I don't see but the best of us would be loth all the Faults we have should be reckon'd up and writ in our Fore-heads, as his are.

*Dis.* Oh, he has been a most wicked Wretch.

*Obs.* You force a man to be an Advocate for One he has no kindness for ; a wicked wretch you say ; why what has he been a Thief, a Murderer ?

*Dis.* No no, I don't mean that way.

*Obs.* What has he been a Clipper or Coyner ?

*Dis.* No no, nor that neither.

*Obs.* Has he been a Whoremaster or a Drunkard, or a Swearer ?

*Dis.* No, I can't say to neither, but he broke and can't pay his Debts.

*Obs.* If you had said he had broke and won't pay his Debts, you had said more to the purpose.

But I must do one piece of Justice to the man, though I love him no better than you do, that is this : That meeting a Gentleman in a *Coffee-House*, where I and every body else was railing at him, the Gentlemen took us up with this short Speech.

Gentlemen, said he, I know this *D Foe* as well as any of you, and I was one of his Creditors, and I compounded with him, and discharg'd him fully ; and several years afterward he sent for me, and tho' he was clearly discharg'd, he paid me all the Remainder of his Debt voluntarily, and of his own accord ; and he told me, that as fast as God should enable him he Intended to do so with every body ; when he had done, he desir'd me to set my hand to a Paper to acknowledg it, which I readily did, and found a great many Names to the Paper, before me, and I think my self bound to own it, tho' I am no Friend to the Book he has wrote,

no

no more than you. What do you think of this story ?

*Dis.* Think of it, I do'nt believe it !

*Obs.* I can't help that, nor I care not whether you do or no, but I assure you after I heard it, I never rail'd at him any more.

*Dis.* Ay, but I'll rail at him for all that.

*Obs.* You Dissenters are in something like Case with the *Pharisees* ; when the Question was put to them by our Saviour about *Johns Baptism* ; whether it was from Heaven or of Men. If a man should ask you of the *Shorrest way*, was it wrote for you or against you ? If you should say for us, you would be askt why then are you so mad with the Author ? And if you should say against you, the People would laugh at you ; for all men but you see into it, and that a Dissenter wrote it ; you must say therefore, we cannot tell, and consequently, that you rail at the Author for you can't tell what.

*Dis.* But we don't count him a Dissenter.

*Obs.* He has all the marks of a Dissenter upon him, but want of Brains.

*Dis.* Why are we so empty of Brains pray ?

*Obs.* There's reason for it, God has given you *Equivalents*.

*Dis.* I don't understand you.

*Obs.* That's a further Testimony of your being a Dissenter ; why if you will have it, take it, I say, *God Almighty would have seem'd unkind to you, if he had not given you a great deal of Grace ? For he has given you but little Wit.*

*Dis.* Well, I hope they'll take him still, I should be glad to see him hang'd for it, I am sure he deserves it ; I heard one met him a little while ago, wou'd I had been there.

*Obs.* Alone, do you mean Sir, or to have helpt the other ?

*Dis.*



*Diff.* Any how, so I could but have taken him.

*Obs.* 'Twas in *Hackney Fields*, was it not ?

*Dis.* Yes, I think so.

*Obs.* Ay, and they say 'twas one of your own Party too, and one that wou'd fain have got the 50 l. but that he drew upon him frightened him out of his Wits, and made him down of his Knees and swear that if ever he met him again, he should shut his eyes till he was half a mile off him.

*Diff.* I don't think he's such a fighting Fellow.

*Obs.* Do you know him?

*Diff.* No not I.

*Obs.* So I thought by your Charity and good Nature; I know him not neither, but the man has the Government upon his Back already, and if they take him they'll avenge your Quarrel for you. Let him alone, 'tis Ingenuous, as I said before in print, to triumph over a man in his Affliction: 'twas but a little while ago he wrote a Book that pleas'd you, and then you cry'd him up as much as now you cry him down.

*Dis.* What Book pray?

*Obs.* Why the New Test of Church of England Loyalty.

*Diff.* Did he write that Book?

*Obs.* I told you I was no Informer, go ask Mr. Bellamy;

*Dis.* why truly that was a good thing, I lik't it fully. 'Twas well done, but this cursed *Shortest-way* is the Devil, he must be turn'd Rogue now, what ever he was then.

*Obs.* Why, this 'tis to oblige a *Dissenter*, if you serve them a hundred times 'tis well, but once get your Head in the Pillory for them, and they'll be the first to palt you with rotten Eggs; what can't you set down one good thing and one bad, and ballance with him: You under-

stand Accompts well enough ; but you *Dissenters*, are like a Shop keeper I knew, who having traded 20 Year with a Gentleman, and serv'd all his Family and gotten a great deal of money by him, at last the poor Gentleman fell to decay, and owing him 40 s. the Shop-keeper abus'd him, and call'd him all the Knaves and Rogues for cheating of him of 40 s.

*Dis.* No, no, this has spoylt all.

*Obs.* Well, but wee'l go back further with you, There's the *Reformation of Manners*, and the *True born-Englishman* ; there he pleas'd you for certain, for he is for reforming your Magistrates.

*Dis.* I don't understand them, I am for Reformation as much as any Body.

*Obs.* But what say you to the Legion Paper?

*Dis.* Ay that was a good thing indeed.

*Obs.* Well, but if he had been taken in doing that, wou'd you not have call'd him as many Rogues then as you do now?

*Dis.* No indeed, shou'd I not?

*Obs.* But I don't find you call him one Rogue the less for it now, and that's hard.

*Diff.* Well, But you see he denyes it, and challenges you to prove it.

*Obs.* Ay, deny it, I told you he was no Fool, indeed I am not glad I printed it, for tho' it is charged upon him by common Fame, I am not for hanging men upon suppositions as you do.

*Diff.* Well, you do well, and I think 'tis a little hard, *the man is gone*, and tho' he has done ill, he might mean no harm, and so let him alone, *I reckon you won't be long before you follow him*.

*Obs.* And when I am gone, you'l call me as many Rogues as you do him, won't you?

*Diff.*



*Dis.* No, it may be I shan't, but I can tell you of some that do already.

*Obf.* It's all one to me, common Fame like a common Strumpet, jilts every Body, but methinks Slander and Reproach, out of the mouth of a Dissenter comes with some wore than common ill favour.

*Diff.* They think they have good reason for it upon you.

*Obf.* And I think not, pray what are their good reasons?

*Diff.* For abusing your Friends?

*Obf.* My Friends, prithee who are they? I know but very few I have, and I am very sure I never abus'd them.

*Dis.* They all agree you would not be permitted to write so long, but the party would have ruffled you before now, only you court them and please them by a Side-Wind, with your railing at King *William's* Friends sometimes.

*Obf.* King *William's* Enemies you mean; look, Sir, I have as much veneration for the Memory of King *William* as any of you, and do but once prove them to be King *William's* Friends, and I'll own all you say, and recant all I have wrote.

*Dis.* It's easy to prove they were his Friends.

*Obf.* Pray Sir, don't you tax me with abusing King *VWilliam*, and abuse him your self, I have prov'd sufficiently they were the Nations Enemies: Now if you can prove the Nations Enemies were King *VWilliam's* Friends, you'll make a fine spot of work on't indeed.

*Diff.* The Nations Enemies! That is, because being in great places, they got as much money as they could, and so would you do, and so have all the Favourites that ever were or will be.

*Obf.* When ever Favourites did, do or shall get money by rapine or injustice, and oppression of the subject, they were and will be the Nations Enemies and their Sovereigns too.

*Diff.* But what have you to do with it ? 'tis none of your business.

*Obf.* 'Tis every Mans business to discover mischief, fraud and ill design, as much as every Man who first spies Fire, has a duty upon him to raise the Neighbours : I am a Subject, and am Cheated among the rest.

*Diff.* You Cheated, why what have you to lose ?

*Obf.* Why, my Liberty, which you said but now, every Man had a Right to, and my Money when I have it ; what's that to you, how little, or much I have, and how do you know how much I may have hereafter.

*Diff.* Nay, they say you get Money by Railing, and so you may soon be Rich.

*Obf.* Then I Rail for something, and you get none, and yet you Rail ; pray who has the best Excuse for it ?

*Diff.* He that has the best Reason for it, not he that gets the most Money by it.

*Obf.* I believe if you could get Money by Railing, you would count it the best Reason in the World.

*Diff.* Why so ?

*Obf.* Because you are so willing to Rail at any body, when you know not for what, nor why, and charge People with Crimes they never Committed ; of all your Christian Dutyes, you make the least use of your Charity.

*Diff.*



*Dis.* Why, since you put so hard, I can tell the time when you abus'd King *William* himself, as openly as you durst speak it, or any body dare Print, particularly in a Poem of yours, call'd the *Foreigners*.

*Obs.* How do you prove 'twas mine?

*Dis.* Nay, they say 'twas yours, you were the Reputed Author, as you said in another case.

*Obs.* I tell you, there's no People in the World so forward to Condemn a Man upon hear say, as the *Dissenters*, when they have a Mind to slander a man, they take every thing upon trust, 'tis their *Shortest way*.

*Dis.* These Scribling People are always meddling with things they have nothing to do with; what have you to do with Kings and Favourites, or that t'other Fellow with the *Shortest Way*: you Pamphleteers are always Quacking with the State.

*Obs.* Come let's turn the Tables, now it's my Play, what have you to do with Acts of Parliaments; you *Dissenters* are always thrusting in your Oar too; what have you to do to talk of Persecution and Acts against *Occasional Conformity*, you are Mountebanking with the State too in every Coffee-House, pray meddle with your own business.

*Dis.* We shall have to do with it, when we feel it.

*Obs.* I am perswaded if you were put to it severely, few of you would stay to feel it, at least few of your Wealthy Members, few of Mr. *Hows* mind, few of such *Dissenters* as go from *Meeting to Church*, and can back-stroke and fore-stroke, Communicate on both sides.

*Dis.*

*Dis.* I wish they may not, but we are afraid 'twill not only be a Persecution, but a very long one.

*Obf.* Why then you are beholding to the Author we talkt of, for you see he is for putting you out of your Pain, but I am of a different Opinion from you in several of your darkeſt thoughts about Persecution.

*Dis.* Pray what is your Opinion?

*Obf.* 1. I am of Opinion that if your Enemies were true Maſters of Politicks, they would not Persecute you at all, I take you to be a declining Party, Toleration will be your Ruin; and if God in Mercy to you don't ſend a Persecution among you, you are loſt, you will all dwindle back into the Church again; your old ſtock of Miniſters dye off, your *Owens, Mantons, Charnocks, Clarkſons, Baxters,* and *Bates's* are gone, and pray what can you name out of the new Generation of your *Leyden Doctors* fit to ſucceed them.

2. The Occaſional Bill at once carries off your Wealthy Members, who are the ſupport of your Clergy, and as Mr. *William's* very well obſerved at *Salter's-Hall*, *If the Rich ones forſake you, the party will be weaken'd ſo as to make you fear the Diſſolution of the whole.* Indeed the Gentleman was in the right, if the Wealthy Members quit the Congregations, 'twill make poor work for the Miniſters, and they like other People Generally do their work beſt where they have beſt Wages.

*Dis.* I thought you had Lov'd the *Dissenters* better, than to abuſe them at this rate.

*Obf.* I don't abuſe them, I wiſh them clear of all their Hypocrites, and that there were none among them but what were *Dissenters* for meer Conſcience:  
if



if that were so, 'twould make their Enemies at Peace with them, they'd never be Persecuted; the Government would Cherish them, and be as tender of them as they would desire. But to be plain with you, 'tis your own Pride and Pushing at great things has made you Obnoxious, and withall your discovering by an Alternate double-fac'd Conscience, that while you pretend to Dissent, and to have tender Consciences, you can nevertheless Conform, if you please; this makes your Enemies suspect your Honesty, and apprehend more trick and design in you, than I hope they need. Nay this gives your Enemies such advantage against you, as you can never Answer.

*Dis.* I do not think any Man ought to be confin'd by Laws and Acts of Parliaments about his Religion.

*Obs.* It may be I think so too; but Men ought to be Honest to their own Principles, whether there were Laws or no; and if I see a Man pretend he can't Conform, and upon occasion I find he can, it makes me suspect his Honesty, and if I once think a Man a Knave, I am not to blame to fence my self against him by Laws: I tell you an Act of Parliament to keep you Honest, can never be call'd Persecution.

*Dis.* Ay, if there was no more in it.

*Obs.* If there be any more in it, I wish there was not, I'm sure I know not what is in it, and I believe you don't neither; pray have you seen the Bill?

*Dis.* No not I, but I hear 'tis a very Terrible Bill.

*Obs.* True to the old way still, *always to judge before you hear.* Indeed I forgot to ask you, but on  
my

my Conscience I don't believe you ever read the Book of the *Shortest way*; Come, be honest.

*Diff.* Read it, why the very Out-side of that is enough for any man to read; I thank God I spend my time better.

*Obs.* I think you ought to spend your time better too, than to give your Verdict upon any thing before you read it.

*Diff.* You are a strange man, why every body says 'tis a horrible Book, and not fit to be read, but what's that to this Act of Parliament?

*Obs.* Why thus much 'tis, that you cry out Persecution from this Act of Parliament, and there's not a word of Persecution in it.

*Diff.* I think 'tis Persecution, if I must not be at liberty to worship God as I think fit.

*Obs.* Still you are without Book, why you may be a Dissenter all the days of your life, and go to Meetings as long as you live, and never be troubled by this Act.

*Diff.* I can't imagine what you mean, why I must pay, God knows what, if I am seen at a Meeting.

*Obs.* Ay, Sir, that's after you have strain'd your Conscience from the Meeting to the Church; after you have bob'd your Religion to be Sheriff of London, or the like; and then want to go back again; but if you, to keep your Conscience, can be content to be without these gay things call'd Places, you may be a Dissenter to the end of the Chapter: So that this will only be a Persecution for Honour sake, not for Conscience sake, and never fall upon you neither, till you bring it upon your self.

*Diff.* Well, I hope it won't pass for all that.

*Obs.* I hope so too, but if it don't, it must be the Lords doing, and it will be marvellous in our eyes.

*Diff*



*Diff.* The House of Lords you mean, I suppose.

*Obs.* I must mean as you will have me, let it be how it will, but if I hope it will not pass, it's from different reasons with you.

*Diff.* Pray, your reasons?

*Obs.* Because I am against (and ever shall be) Imposing any religious Ordinance or part of Worship as a Qualification for any temporal Employment. Let the Princes be at full liberty to employ who, or what sort of their Subjects they see Cause.  
2. Such Impositions are a Bait to People to banter their Consciences, and to comply with that for a Preferment, which otherwise they wou'd not, and so seem to lead them into Temptation : But I don't know the Contents of the Bill, therefore I'll say no more.

*Diff.* And I wou'd not have it pass, because I take it to be a Foundation of Persecution ; 'tis but pulling down the Toleration next, and then we are all undone.

*Obs.* *You Faithless and perverse Generation !* Has not the QUEEN promis'd to maintain your Toleration ? Besides, what's that to the Bill ?

*Diff.* Why shou'd not we be afraid of it, as well as some of the Church-party have the confidence to hope it ? Nay, to condemn the Toleration as Anti-christian, and threaten us with the having it overthrown.

C

*Obs.*

*Obs.* Why these are for *the Shortest way*; you ought to rail at them as much as you do at the man with the *hook Nose*, and *sharp Chin*, and more too; and no doubt if you would but turn Informer, you might hook their Noses into the *Gazett* too, to be sure the Government would not allow of it; they would never suffer the **QUEEN** to be so affronted.

*Diff.* I don't know how 'tis, such things are suffer'd daily. I heard our Parson t'other day say at a Publick Dinner 'twou'd never be well with *England* till some Course was taken to reconcile all Dissenters to the Church, *Longest way* or *Shortest*, 'twas all one to him; he said he hop'd to see the Church flourish without them; and a great deal more, and worse than this.

*Obs.* That was a topping high-flying Gentleman indeed, and why did you not acquaint the Government with it?

*Diff.* What do you think I am an Informer? My Name is not *Bellamy* any more than yours, but pray why do you make so strange of it? Don't we hear daily People expressing their high-flying hopes that a Parliament in *Scotland* will restore Episcopacy there, and yet has not the **QUEEN** given her word, and published it in our *Gazett*, that she will maintain the Presbyterian Government there.

*Obs.* Has she so? Then tho' they have the impudence to hope, you ought not to have the ignorance to fear it. The **QUEEN** gave her word to maintain



tain it! *be not slow of Heart to believe.* She has taken up the famous Motto of *Q. Elizabeth, Semper eadem*, and can you so much as doubt she will deface it, for a few Scotch Bishops.

*Diff.* I am sorry for my Fears, I beg her Majesties pardon, there are so many Turns and Windings in Law and State matters, that we know not what to say to things.

*Obs.* Say! Why a promise is a promise, and you may depend upon it, she has never broke her word with us yet.

*Diff.* Ay, but what if the Parliament shou'd do it?

*Obs.* Nay, If the Parliament does it, we do it ourselves.

*Diff.* Very good, so that we may be undone, and the Toleration Bill taken away; and yet the QUEEN be as good as her word still.

*Obs.* Yes Sir, so you may, whenever an Act of Parliament becomes so without the Royal assent, and when do you think that can be?

*Diff.* Why then these high-flying Church-men are very impudent Fellows, to suggest such things of the QUEEN, and to bully us with overturning the Toleration, and put us in such fears of what they will do to us, when it can never be done without the QUEEN's acting so directly against her Royal Promise.

*Obs.* Well, and what then.

*Dis.* Why I think they ought to be us'd as they us'd the Author of the *Shortest Way*, Gazetted and a Reward for the Discoverer.

*Obs.* Or as you have us'd him rather, *viz.* Rail at them, for being of your own side: you *Dis-senters* are rare Fellows for Punishments, if God should have no more Mercy on you, than you shew to all Men that offend you, we should have *Plagues, Pestilence and Famine* every Year upon us; so now you are come about again, these high Flying *Church Men* have bully'd you with the fears of losing your Toleration, come confess.

*Dis.* Yes.

*Obs.* And made you distrust the QUEEN's Veracity.

*Dis.* Yeas, GOD and the QUEEN forgive us.

*Obs.* And have Terrifi'd you with what things they'l do when they have pull'd down your Anti-christian Toleration, have they not?

*Dis.* Ay, Ay.

*Obs.* And so you thought the *Shortest Way* was Wrote to make a begining with you, and to set the *Dragoons of the Church* upon your Backs; did you not?

*Dis.*



*Dis.* 'Tis very true.

*Obs.* And continued of the same mind like an *Ignoramus*, tho' you heard 'twas Wrote by one of your own Party.

*Dis.* Indeed I did.

*Obs.* Now pray, after so much patience as I have had with you, have a little with me ; and if I can, I'll set you right in your Thoughts of these things.

There are a sort of People among the *Dissenters* who can either Dissent or Conform, as they find their Inclinations or Interest rather directs them, these by their Wealth and Interest have always put themselves into good places, and qualify'd themselves for that purpose, by taking the Sacrament: of these People, even the most moderate *Church Men* have an ill Opinion, and truly so have Two Thirds of your own Friends, for it looks as if they were Men of no Principles at all.

Against these Men the Act against *Occasional Conformity* is principally design'd, and if there was nothing else in the Bill, I believe no good Man would be against it.

Concerning these things, Two sorts of People have been very grossly mistaken, and upon their Mistakes have proceeded to Act very Foolishly.

*First,*

*First*, The high Flying *Church Party* begun to think, all was a going their own way, and that the Government would fall in with them, and do your business for you, and away they run with the Notion, and Preach you down, and Print you down, and Talk you down like Mad Men; there is Sermon upon Sermon, Pamphlet upon Pamphlet: One says you are all Rogues and Hypocrites, another says you are Enemies to the Government, one Flies at the Toleration, and tells the World 'tis Destructive to the Nations Happiness, and the Politicians must pull it down; another says 'tis Antichristian, and we cannot be true Sons of the Church of *England*, if we don't pull it down; others like hare-brain'd Huntsmen that over-run the Hounds, roar you down with full Cry, till they run themselves out of Breath; others are for having you depriv'd of Voices in Elections of Parliament, in hopes of Arriving to that Blessed Day, when they shall have a Parliament of their own Mind; and thus they Run before they are Sent, and without Reflecting upon their ill grounded Zeal, without examining any Authorities, other than their Passions, without regard to good manners, taking no Notice of the Preamble of the Act of Parliament, which Declares against Persecution, or the Honour and Sacred Promise of Her *MAJESTY*, given to make Her Subjects easy, they blow up the Fire of Persecution and Destruction, whether the Government will or no.

You are the next sort of People, who are mistaken, for being Naturally a little Hypish, as the *Beaus* call it, troubled with the Spleen, and Hypochondriack Vapours, this Cloud of Raillery so darken'd your Understanding, that you presently take these



these People and the QUEEN, these People and the Government, these People and the Parliament, to be all of a mind; and the QUEEN having displac'd all your Friends, as 'tis but just, *That all Princes should employ who they please*: And the Parliament falling on your *Occasional Conformers*, and this Book of *the Shortest way* coming out, altogether the high Church Party Thundred at you from the Press and the Pulpit: Away you run with the Notion that you are all to be blown up, that all these Things aim'd at your Destruction, and that Fire and Faggot was at the door.

But the Government is steady, and the QUEEN still has maintained her Motto, the Parliament steers in the middle way, going about to restrain, but not to destroy you; and taking no notice either of the heat of one party, or Folly of the other, they hold the Ballance of your Liberty between your own exorbitant License, and the other party's unchristian Fury; and in my opinion, thus far are you safe.

Diff. But then why has not the Government thought fit to disown the Zeal of these High-flyers, by punishment, and make Examples of some of them?

Obs. I told you, the Dissenters were all for Punishments and Examples, for the same reason that they have not punished you for suspecting the QUEEN's Honesty to her word, charging the Parliament with going about to persecute you, and the like; for this reason, because they are more merciful than both parties deserve.

Diff.

*Dis.* 'Twould have convinc'd us very plainly of two very significant Things. *First*, That there is such a Design, and then that the Authors of it receiv'd no Countenance from Court.

*Obs.* Good Manners and Common Justice ought to have convinc'd you of the last, and your Author of *the Shortest way*, to his Cost, open'd your Eyes in the first, if you had not wilfully shut them against the Light.

1. Good Manners would inform you, not to doubt the Word of your Prince, 'till you had some reason from her MAJESTY her self.

2. Common Justice commands us to suppose every Person just and honest, till something appears to the contrary; and it is a very unchristian, uncharitable way of treating the QUEEN, That because some of the high Church-men have had the Indiscretion, without her Authority, to swagger you out of your Senses; therefore you must suppose her Promise broken, and her Word of no value.

The Author of *the Shortest way* comes with a Lanthorn for you, and he summs up all the black Things this high Party had publish'd, into one General, and if you had any Eyes, you might learn two Things from him, *whice he is like to pay dear enough for teaching you.*

*First*, From the general abhorrence Mankind shew'd of the Book, you might learn that the destruction of your Party is a Cruelty not to be found in the *English* Nature. *Secondly*,



*Secondly*, from the Out-cry made against it by that Party in particular, you might learn who they were that were toucht in the Book, and where the design against them lay.

As to the Quarrel you Dissenters have at the Book *that's a mystery no man can unriddle but your selves.* 'Tis like Mr. Mead's Wheel within a Wheel, and a further Testimony to the World that you are a most unaccountable People whose ways are past finding out.

*Diff.* So that you would go about to perswade me the Book was writ of our side.

*Obf.* First, Sir, 'tis hard to know what side you are off, and

*Secondly*, Sir I know you too well to go about to perswade you to any thing, whose peculiar Talent is to be unperswadeable; but if you will please to answer me a few Questions you may perhaps perswade your self of something or other.

*Diff.* What Questions?

*Obf.* Why are the high Church-men angry with him, while at the same time they openly declare 'tis the only way to deal with you, and what they would feign be at?

*Dis.* Truly you puzzle me a little there.

*Obf.* They are angry, because they take the Book as the Author meant it, and you, because you  
D take

take it as he wrote it, they as he meant, *viz.* to expose them, and tho' they are heartily willing to do you a Kindness that way, and have shewn their good will by their words, yet knowing they wanted power to execute it, and being conscious to themselves that the Government was not of their Opinion; they are enrag'd to have all their designs, laid open in Minature, and an Abridgment communicated to the World in *true Billingsgate*.

*Dis.* There may be some truth in this, but pray why then is the Government so angry with him? I believe I have puzzled you now.

*Obs.* No, no, the Government may have Reasons to be angry that you nor I know not off, nor have nothing to do with: But what if I should suppose

That the Government not thinking any person could be so Barbarous as to harbour such a villainous Design as the Book suggests; are displeas'd at it as an affront done to the *Church of England* to Father Principles of Cruelty and Destruction upon her Members, which they are not guilty off.

I say, if I suppose this to be a Reason, I believe you cannot suppose a better.

*Dis.* I confess, I begin to have better Thoughts of the Government than I had.

*Obs.* I'm glad of that.

*Dis.* I begin to hope they won't persecute us now, and as for *Occasional Conformity* what care I? I shall never be Lord Mayor or Common Council man;  
If



If I am call'd to it, 'tis time enough to come off then.

*Obs.* God Almighty is wonderfully beholden to you, when he calls you from a middle State to a good place, you'l take it for granted He calls you from the Meeting to the Church, and you'l be sure to come. But I tell you, you ought to be so far from the fear of a Persecution, that if you have any respect to your Party, you ought to pray for a Persecution upon them or ye are all undone.

*Dis.* Why thou art mad, thou art for the *Shortest* way.

*Obs.* No, no, I an't for such Persecution neither, but I told you my mind before, I am sure you have receiv'd more damage in your Interest as Dissenters, and more weakned your Reputation as well as your Number, Since the late Tolleration, than ever your Enemies did for you by all the penal Laws, Informers, Fines, and Prisons of the last Persecution.

*Dis.* Well, but here's another danger upon us that we han't talkt of yet, and fear it will come upon us too.

*Obs.* Pray what's that?

*Dis.* We are affraid that this restless Party will overthrow our Settlement, for they do not stick to talk that way.

*Obs.* We affraid, who do you mean by we? Are not the *Church of England* as much concern'd in the Settlement as you and more too, as they are the major part of the Nation? and We (if you will  
D 2 give

give me leave to talk your way) We Protestants  
 fear nothing for our Settlement, and for this, I'll  
 give you a Quotation from the man with the hook  
 Nose and sharp Chin, it may be you won't like it  
 because of the Author, but his words are these.

" The Settlement of the Crown (says he) is the  
 " Basis of our Religion, Laws and Liberties. This is  
 " the solid Bottom on which we all stand, and of  
 " which, with respect to civil Right, may be said *Other*  
 " *Foundation can no man lay than that which is Laid.*  
 " 'Tis the Rock on which we are all built, and  
 " that stone of which, according to the Scripture,  
 " it may without prophaneness be said, *Whosoever*  
 " *it falls upon, he will be broken to pieces, but on whom-*  
 " *soever it shall fall, it will grind him to Powder.*

" 'Tis the last thing the People of England will  
 " part with after all their Estates, Wives and Chil-  
 " dren, Churches and Houses are destroyed.

" 'Tis the Pledge of the Divine Goodness to the  
 " Nation, which they purchased at the expence of  
 " 50 millions of Money, and the Blood of above  
 " 100000 *English* men in Eleven years War.

" 'Twas on eof the great Things King *WILLIAM*  
 " did for us, and the Treasure *GOD* and his  
 " *MAJESTY* left in our Hands in trust for our  
 " Posterity; which if we part with, our Children  
 " will curse our Memory and digg us out of our  
 " Graves.

" 'Tis a Thing so sacred the dissolving of it can-  
 " not be mention'd without a Crime, nor so much  
 " as intended without being guilty of Treason in  
 " the most intense Degree.

" 'Tis



" 'Tis the solid Prop upon which stands her present  
 " MAJESTIES Throne, and the right and just  
 Title she has to govern us.

" 'Tis like the two Pillars in the House of *Da-*  
 " *gon* whoever pulls them down will, like *Sampson*  
 " be buryed in the Ruines, and pull the whole  
 " Nation upon their Heads.

" I Fear nothing for this Settlement ; the Parlia-  
 " ment of *England* are the Trustees for the seeing  
 " it forth coming to the People of *England*, and a  
 " Parliament of *England* will never betray their trust.

" The Parliament will not, and all the rest of  
 " Humane Power dare not attempt to dissolve it, no  
 " Weapon form'd against it can prosper.

*Dis.* Is this done by our *Shortest way* Man ?

*Obs.* The very same.

*Dis.* Well, I shall love him the better for it :  
 But there's one thing more still, what say you to the  
 Prince of *Wales* ? If ever he comes again you'll be  
 hang'd, that's for certain.

*Obs.* And if ever we let him come we ought all  
 to be hang'd, I can do no better than refer you  
 to the same Author.

" The Act of Settlement (says he) and the Prince  
 " of *Wales* are the two *Bucketts*, keep one but  
 " up and the other must be down, and put the one  
 " down.

“ down and the other comes up of Course : There  
 “ can be no pretence made to alter or dispose the  
 “ Settlement, but the Bringing in the Prince of *Wales* ;  
 “ therefore whoever they are that mention it, we  
 “ ought to suppose they wou’d be so understood.

*Dis.* So that you are of Opinion we are in no danger of our Settlement.

*Obf.* Indeed I am of the Opinion your Fears both of the Prince of *Wales*, and of altering the Settlement, and of Persecution, are all groundless and equally so. I would only advise the Dissenters to be honest to their own Principles; if they can conform they ought to do it, if they cannot, no body forces them; let them dissent, and not for the desire of preferment bring such a Scandal upon their Integrity, as if they were Men of no Principles. ’Tis scandalous to the very Name of a Dissenter and injurious to all the rest of that Body who are honest and conscientious.

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and so I bid you Farewel.